

CARLSBAD: Carlsbad man donates piano to school in wife's memory

By STACY BRANDT sbrandt@nctimes.com | Posted: Wednesday, December 28, 2011 8:00 pm

After his wife died in April, Sal DeBlasi wanted to do something with her piano that would help the public and memorialize her.

He decided to donate it to [Carlsbad High School](#) for students and teachers to play in the band room.

"It's a good feeling," he said.

The 89-year-old originally wanted to give the 1990 Kawai upright piano to a business group working to install a public piano at the downtown Coaster station.

However, Don Christiansen, who first brought up the station idea, said that he thought the instrument was too nice to go outside and recommended he give it instead to the high school, where students and teachers will move into new classrooms when they return to school Jan. 9.

"It's a really nice piano," he said. "I just thought it was better suited for something other than being outside."

Christiansen said he has gotten six other offers to donate pianos for the train station. One could be in place as soon as spring.

At Carlsbad High, the new piano will be a big upgrade for the band and will allow it to use its older one in a practice room, said Marina Hall, who leads the orchestra at the school.

"It's going to get a lot of love, and it's going to get a lot of use," she said. "We're really honored and we feel really lucky to have it."

Band students often play the piano when they get free time, she said.

DeBlasi lives in the [Carlsbad by the Sea](#) retirement community. His wife, Sylvia, was interested in music her whole life, he said, attending a prestigious arts school as a teenager in New York City.

The school plans to put a plaque on the piano as a memorial, thanking the DeBlasis for the donation, Hall said.

It feels good to know that the piano will have a good home and will be useful for students for years, DeBlasi said, especially in light of recent money woes for schools across the state.

Carlsbad Unified School District is bracing for an estimated deficit of nearly \$8 million in next year's budget if the money coming in from property taxes and from the state doesn't grow.

"This is the time for people to donate things to schools," DeBlasi said. "It's serving a very useful purpose at a time when the economy is going down the sewer."